



**The Alleged Role  
of  
Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi  
in the Fall of Baghdad**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Alleged Role of Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi in the Fall of Baghdad

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## The Alleged Role of Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi in the Fall of Baghdad

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.Khwajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi

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## The Alleged Role of Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi in the Fall of Baghdad

**point**

The present article is the first of two articles written by the author to show the misrepresentation of certain historical facts and to refute groundless accusations against the Shi`ah and in particular the role of the great philosopher, theologian, astronomer and mathematician Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi

The present article, which appeared in the Persian journal Kayhan-e Andisheh (No. ٢٢), is a study of the allegations regarding the role of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi in the fall of Baghdad and the downfall of the `Abbasid dynasty at the hands of the Mongol conqueror, Hulagu Khan

The second article is concerned with the role of the Shi'i minister of the Caliph, Ibn

`Alqami, and allegations regarding the Shi'ah of Iraq in respect of their role in the fall  
.of the `Abbasid caliphate

It is hoped that such objective studies will help put an end to inter-sectarian prejudices and contribute to Muslim unity by showing how baseless allegations and indifference to historical facts had led to create an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and hostility amongst Muslims that provided an opportunity to the enemies of Islam  
.and Muslims to divide Muslims for their own advantage

### **The Advent of Shi`ism in Iraq**

The story of the influence of Shi'ism in Iraq is a long one, to describe which

even briefly is beyond the scope of this article. From the time Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali (A) shifted his capital from Madinah to Kufah<sup>(1)</sup> in order to cope with the difficulties and problems of his four and a half years reign, the seed of Shi'ism was planted in that city. But this did not lead to any phenomenal increase in the number of Shi'ites in Iraq.

However, in the 7th century and thereafter Shi'ism spread to other parts of Iraq

Much later Shi'ism spread in Baghdad with the efforts of Shi'i `Ulama' and was able to survive despite the pressures and unlimited oppression of the `Abbasids. This situation continued until the entry of the Buyids towards the middle of the 10th century into Baghdad. The Buyids supported the Shiites and over a period of one hundred years spread the influence of Shi'ism in collaboration with such Shi'i 'ulama' as al-Shaykh al-Mufid.<sup>(2)</sup> Subsequently the Seljuq rule limited the Shi'i influence, but could not eliminate it altogether

With the passage of time, the power of the `Alawids increased and the Shi'is emerged as an important religious group in Baghdad. Moreover, they established another centre of Shi'ism at Hillah. The growing importance of the Shi'is and their political influence led to conflict with and opposition by the Sunnis. The 'Abbasid caliphs often persecuted the Shi'is with the help of the Sunni group

The time of al-Nasir li-Din Allah, the 'Abbasid caliph, marked the beginning of the Mongol incursions into the eastern parts of the Muslim world

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Rasul Ja'fariyan, Tarikh e siyasi-ye Islam ta sal-e chehellum-e hijri Dar Rah Haqq, -1  
.Qumm

Ali Asghar Faqih, Al-a Buwayh wa awda'-e zaman-e ishan, Dar Rah-e Haqq, -2  
.Qumm

The caliph tried to woo and enlist the support of the Shi`is who formed a powerful community in Baghdad and had sympathizers among the Khwarazmshahis who had been hostile to the 'Abbasid caliph and supported the Shi`is of Baghdad. His inclination towards the `Alawids and the Shiites made some regard him as a Shi`i himself

Ibn al-'Tiqtaqa writes about him that he believed in Imami doctrines and his ministers [\(either showed particular inclination towards Shi`ism or were Shi'i themselves.\)](#)<sup>(1)</sup>

This was deemed a political move for attracting the Shi'i support.<sup>(2)</sup> Al-Sa'di mentions his appointment of Ibn al-`Alqami, a Shi'i, to the ministerial office as a move to please [\(the Shi'i scholar Radi al-Din `Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Tawus al-Hasani.\)](#)<sup>(3)</sup>

This action of al-Nadir shows not only the influence of the Shiites, but exposes the latter's confrontation with their opponents, a contradiction which he had tried to resolve for his own advantage

This polarization continued for several centuries and surfaced every year in conflicts on two particular days, 'Ashura' and Ghadir. The details of these conflicts have been recorded in al-Bidayah wa al-nihayah of Ibn Kathir, in al-Muntazam of Ibn al-Jawzi, and in the Shadharat al-dhahab of Ibn al-'Imad al-Hanbali

In the latter period, Shi'i influence in the `Abbasid administration was of such magnitude that many of their ministers were Shi`i. Aside from manifesting the Shi'ite acumen in administrative affairs, this fact cannot be regarded as being unrelated to efforts at inducement of Shi'is to accept the Sunni supremacy over the entire Islamic

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Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, Tarikh-e Fakhre trans. by Gulpaygani, Bungah-e Tarjume wa - ۱  
Nashr-e Kitab, Tehran, ۱۳۶۰, p. ۴۳۲; Shaykh 'Abbas Qummi, al-Kuna wa al-'alqab,  
.Beedar, Qumm, pp. ۱۹۳, ۱۹۴

Shirin Bayani, Din wa dawlat dar Iran-a 'ahd-a Moghol, Markaz-a Nashr-e - ۲  
.Dinishgihi, Tehran ۱۳۶۷, pp. ۲۷۰, ۲۷۱

Al-Sa`idi, Mu`ayyad al-Din ibn al-`Alqami wa asrar suqut al-dawlat al 'Abbasiyyah, -۳





The last `Abbasid caliph, al-Musta`sim, appointed Mu'ayyid al-Din ibn 'Alqami, a Shi'i, as minister, and the latter held the post until the fall of Baghdad and the execution of the caliph. Despite the Abbasid caliphs' policy, some Sunni elements inside the regime tried to make the caliph take occasionally an anti-Shi'i stand, which would result in .riots and carnage in Baghdad causing tremendous losses to both the groups

Once such conflict occurred even in ٤٥٤/١٢٥٦, one year before Baghdad fell.<sup>(١)</sup> It aggravated the hostility of the Shi'ah against the `Abbasid caliphate. In this regard a letter written by Ibn `Alqami to one of the Shi'i elders, al-Sayyid Taj al-Din :Muhammad ibn Nasr al-Husayni, clarifies the Shi'i position vis-a-vis the caliphate

Karkh (a locality In west Baghdad where the Shi` is resided), this venerable town, has been destroyed and the legacy of the Noble Prophet has been ravaged. The house of `Ali have been pillaged and their Hashimite followers have been taken captive. That which happened is not surprising, for they are followers of al-Husayn - upon whom be .peace - whose sanctuary and sanctity were violated and whose blood was spilled

No doubt, Satan has deceived this group (the opponents). Now, what can be done save maintaining fair patience? The announcement has been made (by the caliphate regime) that so much troops are to be sent to the town so that the inhabitants are (driven away from the place in disgrace and misery.<sup>(٢)</sup>

,The foregoing background was the established general rule which was

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Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, op. cit., p. ٤٤٦; Bayani, op. Cit., p. ٣١٣; al-Dhahabi, Duwal al Islam, - ١ .Beirut, al Alami, p.٣٦٠

Wassaf al-hadrah, vol. ١, p. ٢٨, in Bayani, op. cit., p. ٣١٤; Ibn al-Wardi, Ta'rikh Ibn al- -٢ Wara Haydariyyah, Najaf, p. ٢٧٩, Ibn al-Wardi refers to Ibn `Alqami as minister of Arbil; see also al-Ya'qubi, Babuliyyat, Najaf, vo١.٣, p. ٣٤, as cited by al-Sa'idi, pp. ٣٣, ٣٤; al-Dhahabi, op. cit., p. ٣٦٠; Khwand Mir, Habib al-siyar, ed. by al-siyaqi, Tehran,

Khayyam, vol. ۲, p. ۳۶۶; al-Ghassani, al-'Asjad al-masbuk, Baghdad, Dar al-Bayan,  
.۱۹۷۵, p. ۶۲۶

however, occasionally broken. But sectarian prejudice adversely affected both the sides. The rulers, acting in a manner injurious to their own long-term interest and that of the people, either on account of prejudice or for the sake of prolonging their rule, promoted sectarian differences and discord

Such was the background that resulted in the allegations regarding the Shi'i role in the fall of Baghdad, which was in fact the fall of the `Abbasid caliphate, and led some prejudiced thinkers to accuse the Shi`is of instigating the Mongols to overthrow the .caliphate

Despite the fact that many Sunni `ulama'-like Sharaf al-Din ibn al Jawzi, a personal confidant of the caliph – were in the retinue of Hulaga Khan, the presence of Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, (٥٩٧-٦٧٢/١٢٠٠-١٢٧٣) – may God's mercy be upon him – and the part of Mu'yyid al-Din ibn `Alqami the minister of al-Musta`sim, in the events of the time were taken as grounds for the allegation against the Shi'is. This accusation was publicized by the Hanbalis and their precursors, whose hostility towards the Shi'is – like their enmity towards other Muslim sects in Baghdad – was greater than that of .any other hostile group

:The points which shall be brought out in this study are at fellows

First, the Mongols themselves were already expanding their conquests in Iran and .Iraq. They hardly needed any incitement in this regard

Secondly, the presence of Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi in the court of Halagu Khan and the related reports cannot prove that he prompted Halagu

.Khan to put an end to the ` Abbasid caliphate

Thirdly, the presence and conduct of Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi had been for the sake of reducing the losses and preventing the destruction of Islam, the truth of which is evidenced in history

Fourthly, Ibn al-'Alqami too had done nothing but express his genuine convictions in taking a stand which appeared to him the correct position in those conditions, with a view to protecting innocent lives which were put in serious danger by the caliphate for the sake of protecting itself

Fifthly, according to Ibn al-'Athir it was the Baghdad caliphs who allured and encouraged the Mongols to conquer the Islamic lands. It may be affirmed that on the whole the Shi`is, like many of the Sunnis, not only delivered themselves from the catastrophe through their correct stand, but made use of the situation for spreading Islam in general and Shi`ism in particular

Before proceeding further in our study of the issues mentioned above, it is necessary to examine the nature and content of the accusation against the Shi`is and Khawajah Nasir al-Din

Among the historians who lived somewhat after the time of the events was Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Taymiyyah (d. ٧٢٨/١٣٢٧). He blamed Khawajah Nasir al-Din al Tusi for the fall of Baghdad. Ibn Taymiyyah is the originator of a new school of thought, whose background is traceable to Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the Ahl al-hadith. His writings are noted for attack against Shi`ism, which are severer than those of other groups

In many of his books, his anti-Shi'i prejudice finds vehement expression. In this regard too, with his characteristic bitterness which might have been provoked by the increasing power of Shi'is in his times – he sits for judgment and, in opposition to authentic historical accounts pertaining to Mongol conquests written before him, .holds the Khawajah responsible for the fall of Baghdad

At one place, while mentioning the fame of the Khawajah among the Sunnis and the Shi` is, Ibn Taymiyyah writes: “It was he who incited the Mongol Khan to kill the Caliph and the `ulama .....” Thereafter, he accuses the Khawajah of not paying heed to Islamic precepts, of flouting the prohibitions of the Shari'ah, of not performing the prayers, of commission of indecencies, of indulgence in intoxicants, and of [\(commission of adultery.\)](#)<sup>(1)</sup>

In another place Ibn Taymiyyah says about the Khawajah, “It was he who ordered the Caliph to be killed and the `Abbasid caliphate to be brought to an end.”<sup>(2)</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, one of his famous pupils, following him accuses the Khawajah of participating in the killing of the Caliph and `ulama', while calling him such names as “Nasir al-shirk wa al-kufr wa al-ilhad” (an ally of polytheism, unbelief and apostasy). He condemns not only the Khawajah's philosophical convictions, but accuses him of denying the Hereafter, . rejecting Divine attributes, and of learning sorcery, and [\(worshipping idols at the end of his life.\)](#)<sup>(3)</sup>

The foregoing shows that neither Ibn Taymiyyah nor Ibn Qayyim recognized any restraint in defaming him and went

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.Ibn Taymiyyah, Minhaj al sunnat al Nabawiyyah, Cairo, 1903, voi.2, p.199 –1

.Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmu'at al-rasa'il, Cairo, 1905, p. 97 –2

Ibn 'Imad al-Hanbali, Shadharat al dhahab fi akhbar man dhahab, Ihyi' al Turath al- –3

'Arabi, pp. 359, 340; see also al-Zirikli, al-'A'lam, vol.7, p.36

to the extent of accusing the Khawajah of violating the prohibitions of the Shari'ah and committing idolatry. Others like al Subki<sup>(1)</sup> and Khwand Mir <sup>(2)</sup> have followed suit with Ibn Taymiyyah in blaming the Khawajah of having brought about the conquest of .Baghdad

In modern times, some orientalists, like the authors of the Cambridge History of Iran, have mentioned the allegations about the role of the Khawajah. Edward Browne and Arberry have accepted the alleged role of the Khawajah<sup>(3)</sup>, as mentioned by Dr. <sup>(4)</sup>Hairi.

Among the Shi'is, too, from the 10th/11th century onwards, some writers have applauded the Khawajah's alleged action against the `Abbasids and regarded the same as a strong point for the Khawajah. One of them is al Khwansari in Rawdat al janat, who uses strong language in mentioning the matter <sup>(5)</sup>. Likewise, Qadi Nur Allah <sup>(6)</sup>al-Shushtari lauded the alleged role of the Khawajah.

Aside from the approval or disapproval of the Khawajah's alleged action, his involvement in the events is something doubtful. Laudatory remarks, like that of al-Khwansari, surely arose from the writers' prejudice against the 'Abbasid caliphs. Such writings do not constitute proper evidence, because the earlier and original sources have not referred to the Khawajah's role. Moreover, they belong to several centuries after the period of the events in question

Yet, we may mention another writer whose lack of care and susceptibility to influence by the background of Sunni-Shi`i differences has led him a step further than Ibn Taymiyyah in laying the blame on the Shi`ah in general, although he

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.Al-Subki, Tabaqat al Shafiyyat al-kubra, Cairo, ۱۹۰۶, vol.۵, p. ۱۱۵-۱

.Mir, op. cit., vol.۲, p. ۳۳۸-۲

Boel, Cambridge History of Iran, translated by Anusheh, Amir Kabir, Tehran, ۱۳۶۷ -۳ (Sh.), vol. ۵, p. ۵۱۲

Ha'iri, "Tahqiq min wujhat nazar tadwin al-ta'rikh," Majallat al-Thaqafat al- - ۴

'Islamiyyah, No. ۱۳, p. ۹۷

.Al-Khwansari, Rawdat al jinan, Qumm, Isma'iliyan, vol. ۶, pp. ۳۰۰, ۳۰۱, ۳۱۵. ۳۱۶-۵

.Al-Shushtari, Majalis al-mu'minin, Islamiyyah, Tehran, vol. ۲, p. ۲۰۵-۶



defends the Khawajah against the charge of irreligion. He refers to the Shi'i role as one of the primary causes of the downfall of the caliphate.<sup>(۱)</sup> He writes: "...And eventually during the period, the hand of Shi'ism came out of the sleeve of the Mongols and finished the matter once for all."<sup>(۲)</sup>

He cites Khwand Mir (۹th/۱۵th century) in Habib al-siyar, Qadi Nur Allah al-Shushtari, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and al Subki with regard to the alleged role of the Khawajah in the overthrow of the Caliph, and writes: "...Almost all the sources agree in the matter."<sup>(۳)</sup> No such consensus existed among the historians who lived close to the time of the downfall of Baghdad, as will be made clear later on?<sup>(۴)</sup>

The reliability of the afore-mentioned writings is doubtful, since they reflect the writers' prejudice. Even if it is assumed that Khawajah Nasir al-Din had a hand in the event, any statement to the effect that "the hand of Shi'ism came out of the Mongol sleeve" is a regrettable lapse for anyone while making a serious historical judgment, and especially when made by a researcher

### **Mongol Plans for Expansion and Sack of Baghdad**

History reports that Chinghiz Khan initially sought friendship and close relations with the rulers of Iran and Iraq. At first he did not want to invade and attack these lands. To develop friendly relations, he sent his envoy and a trade delegation to the court of the Khwarazm Shah. The pride of Sultan Muhammad Khwarazm Shah (d. ۶۱۷/۱۲۲۰) caused him to reject the overture and

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.Bayani, op. cit., p. ۳۰۴-۱

.Ibid., pp. ۲۸۵, ۵۰۵-۲

.Ibid., pp. ۳۰۶, ۳۰۶-۳

( In regard to this subject, see the article of Dr. Ha'iri mentioned above (Note ۱۴-۴

.kill the envoy and the traders

The sultan's arrogance created difficulties for himself and for Iran. It led to a series of battles between the Mongols and the Khwarazmshahis in the eastern parts of Iran?<sup>(1)</sup>

To be sure the thoughtless action of Khwarazmshah, who perhaps failed to foresee the imminent success of the Mongols, was one of the causes of the Mongol attack. According to Ibn al-'Athir, the sultan regretted his ugly action and was seeking a way out when Chinghiz Khan's message reached him. It said: "You killed my companions and traders and took away their possessions. Now, be ready for a war."<sup>(2)</sup>

On the other hand, the Mongols, who at first wanted only to unify the eastern territories, subsequently decided to expand their realm, and by availing the excuse provided by the Khwarazm sultan began their campaigns into Central Asia

Some other factors, too, prompted their attack. In particular, the instigation of the Mongols by the Europeans to attack Islamic lands is notable. During the Crusades such an attack could be a great help to the Christians. In this connection, Armenian Christians were on the side of the Westerners.<sup>(3)</sup>

From the time Chinghiz Khan began to entertain his ambition of expanding his realm into the regions of Western Asia, the Mongols vigorously pursued their conquests, and until his death in 624/1227 many areas of Iran had come under the Mongol onslaughts.

<sup>(4)</sup>These included Rey, Qumm, Kashan and Saveh, that is areas of 'Iraq al ajam.<sup>(4)</sup>

The survival of Jalal al-Din Khwarazm Shah and

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B. Spuler, Die Mongolen in Iran, Ta'rikh-e Mughal dar Iran, Persian tran., Intisharat-e Ilmi wa Farhane Tehran ۱۳۶۵, pp. ۲۶, ۲۷

Ibn al-'Athir, al-Kamil fi al-ta'rikh, Dar sadir, ۱۹۶۶, vol. ۱۲, p. ۳۶۳; Mustawfi, Ta'rikh-e Gudhidah, Amir Kabir, Tehran, ۱۳۶۲, p. ۴۹۳; Minhaj Siraj, Tabaqat-e Nasiri ed. by Habibi, Dunyay-e Kitab, Tehran, ۱۳۶۳, p. ۳۱۱; al-Suyuti, Ta'rikh al-khulafa, ed. by Muhy al-Din

.Abd al-Hamid, p. ۴۶۹

Spuler, op. cit., p. ۴۹; Mudarisi Zanjani, Sargudhasht wa 'aqa'id-e Khawajah Nasir al-  
Din Tusi, Amir Kabir, Tehran, p. ۵۸; Bayani, op. cit, p, ۱۸۰, ۱۸۱; Hasan al-'Amin, Majallat  
al-Thaqafat al-'Islamiyyah, No. ۲۱, "Haqa'iq Ta'rikhiyyah hawl al-Tahaluf al-Maghuli",  
p. ۱۶۰; al-Sa'idi, op. cit., pp. ۱۲۸, ۱۳۲; Kuk, Baghdad Madinat al-'Islam, vol. ۱, pp. ۲۲۲, ۲۶۶  
.Spuler, op. cit., from Ibn al-'Athir, vol. ۱۲, p. ۲۷۲-۴

his attack and retreat tactics in battling the aggressors (until ٦٢٨/١٢٣٠) restricted the penetration of the Mongols to the central areas of Iran, and the invaders turned towards the Caucasian areas where they extended their conquests. With the departure from the scene of Jalal al-Din, the Mongols, who had remained content with the occupation of Khorasan, began to invade other areas of Iran as well

That which is notable is the fact that the Mongols had since then the conquest of Baghdad in their plans. Nearly twenty-one years before the fall of Baghdad, when al-Mustansir bi-Allah was the caliph, the Mongols had launched attacks on the city. This practically shows that individuals like Khawajah Nasir al-Din could not have played a role in instigating the invaders and that the Mongols were already on the move in this direction

Rashid al-Din refers to the Mongol attack of the years ٦٣٤/١٢٣٦ and ٦٣٥/١٢٣٧, in the following words

In the beginning of the mentioned period, the `Abbasid caliph was al-Mustansir bi-Allah. The Mongol forces under the orders of Baychownian were dispatched for attack and they laid siege to Arbil. When the Caliph learnt about it, he sent Shams al-Din Arsalan with three thousand cavalrymen. When the Mongols came to know about it, they immediately lifted the siege and retreated

The Caliph asked the jurists to rule as to which of the two, hajj and jihad, should take precedence, and the fatwa was given by consensus in favor of jihad. Then he ordered that the hajj pilgrimage

that year be deferred. He ordered the scholars and the jurists, the elite and the ordinary people of Baghdad to train themselves in archery and the use of arms. He also ordered the ditch and rampart of Baghdad to be built

The Mongols returned another time with the purpose of taking Arbil. Furthermore, he commanded Amir Arsalan Takin to station himself together with his forces outside Baghdad, awaiting the arrival of the Mongols. When the Mongols came to know about it, they changed their direction towards Daquq and the towns, around Baghdad, killing, pillaging and taking captives. The Mongols were routed and forced to retreat from Jabal Himrin. The Turks and the Caliph's slaves pursued them, killing many and (liberating the captives of Arbil and Daquq.)

Several similar reports pertaining to the attacks in the years 632-635/1234-1237 have been given by other historians. According to a report by Ibn Al al-Hadid, who himself witnessed the Mongol on slaughters, a Mongol force led by Bajaktai, the Junior, attacked Baghdad on 17 Rabi` al-'Awwal 643/1245, which was repulsed and the assailants retreated. In the year 647/1249 too, the Mongols attacked, this time Khanaqin. The earlier attack of 643/1245, mentioned by Ibn Abi al-Hadid, is mentioned by Ibn - al-Kazeruni (d. 697/1297) to have occurred on 17 Rabi` al-Thani 642/1244.

There are subsequent evidences which indicate that the Mongols were hostile to the caliph, and they regularly complained about him to the Mongol Khan. This being the case, there was no need for anyone else

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Rashid al-Din, Jami' al-tawrikh, ed. by Karimi, vol. 1, p. 576; see also Mustawfi, op. cit., pp. 367, 368.

Al-Sa'idi, , op. cit., pp. 83, 84, from Ibn al-Fuwati, al-Hawadith al jami'ah, p. 84. Also -2 see Ibn al-'Ibri Mukhtasar ta'rikh al-duwal, al-Matba'ah al-Kathulikiyyah, p. 250; Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, ed. by Abd al-Fadl Ibrahim, Egypt, vol. 8, p. 238. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, op. cit., vol. 8, pp. 239, 240 -3

.Ibn al-Fuwati, op. cit., p. ۲۴۱ -۴

.Ibn al-Kazeruni, Mukhtasar al-tarikh, ed. by Mustafa Jawad, Baghdad, ۱۹۷۰, p. ۲۸۶ -۵

.to incite them against the caliph

When Mengü (Mongke) (649-658/1251-1260) assumed the leadership of Mongols, Baychownian moved with a vast force to protect his domain in Iran. He sent an emissary to the Khan and had complained about the 'heretics' (the Ismailis) and the caliph himself. The grand qadi Shams al-Din al-Qazwini, who was at the time near Mengü incited the latter against the Isma'ilis, mentioning their influence over some [regions.](#)<sup>(1)</sup>

In the wake of the above developments, Mengü sent his brother Hulagu (Hulegu) to lead expedition in the region, telling him: "...Start from Quhistan (Ismaili possession in east Iran), destroy the walls and forts and then move on to subjugate Iraq. If the caliph is found to be submissive, do not harm him in any way, and if he behaves haughtily and hypocritically send him to join the others."<sup>(2)</sup> Khwand Mir reports Mengü as having ordered Hulagu, "...Occupy the lands from the Oxus to the furthest parts of [Egypt.](#)"<sup>(3)</sup>

If we review the behavior of the caliph before and during the fifty days of confrontation with the Mongol conqueror, it can be seen that he had infuriated Hulagu Khan so much that had the Khawajah or anyone of the nobles or scholars opposed him he too would have been killed as well, as happened in the case of Husam al-Din .who had warned Hulagu of dire consequences if the caliph's blood were shed

### History on the Khawajah's Role

point

In respect of affirmation or rejection of the alleged involvement of Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi in the fall of Baghdad, we

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.Rashid al-Din, op. cit, vol. ۲, pp. ۲۸۴, ۲۸۵ -۱

.Ibid., vol. ۲, pp. ۲۸۶, ۲۸۷ -۲

.Khwand Mir, op. cit., vol. ۳, p. ۹۴ -۳

:can divide the historical records into three kinds

### a) Sources Which are Silent Concerning the Khawajah)

Writings in this regard pertain to a period of within a hundred years after the fall of Baghdad. Most of the writers either witnessed the conquests of the Mongols or lived in the decades immediately thereafter. The absence of any mention of the Khawajah in these writings can be taken to mean negation of the alleged role, since the question had been rather a sensitive one

Among the writers of the period, Minhaj Siraj in his book, *Tabaqat e Nasiri* (or *Tarikh-e Iran wa Islam*), which seems to be written in ۶۵۸/ ۱۲۶۰ (pp. ۴۹۷), refers to the Mongol siege of Baghdad. He mentions some imaginary victories of the caliph, as well as the purported treachery of Ibn `Alqami (to be discussed later on). He does not make any [mention of the Khawajah.](#)<sup>(۱)</sup>

Ibn al-`Ibn (d. ۶۸۵/۱۲۸۶) is another writer who describes the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in relatively greater detail. However, he does not mention anything about the Khawajah in this regard.<sup>(۲)</sup> In the subsequent pages he refers to the death of the Khawajah, mentions the latter's deep knowledge of several sciences, but says [nothing about any role of the Khawajah in political matters.](#)<sup>(۳)</sup>

According to Dr. Ha'iri, Ibn al-Fawti in his book written in the year ۶۵۷/۱۲۵۹ writes about [the fall of Baghdad, but mentions nothing about the Khawajah.](#)<sup>(۴)</sup>

In the few pages written by Khawajah Nasir al-Din appended to Juwayni's *Tarikh-e jahangushai*, where some details pertaining to the conquest of Baghdad are given, nothing

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.Minhaj Siraj, op. cit., p. ۱۳۰ -۱

.Ibn al Ibri, op. cit., pp. ۲۷۰-۲۷۲ -۲

.Ibid., pp. ۲۸۶, ۲۸۷ -۳

.Ha'iri, op, cit., p. ۸۷ -۴



[\(whatever is mentioned concerning any role of the Khawajah in the events.](#)[\(1\)](#)

Hamd Allah Mustawfi, a famous historian and geographer of the 13th/14th century (d. 730/1329), was among those who wrote about the Mongol conquest of Baghdad. But he does not mention anything about the Khawajah in the few lines he writes about the [event.](#)[\(2\)](#)

Ibn Taba Tabā (Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, d. 709/1309) is a critical historian who wrote his book in 701/1301, wherein the fall of Baghdad is described in the account of al-Musta'sim's life. However, he does not write anything about the Khawajah having played any role in it.[\(3\)](#) The only time' he mentions the Khawajah's name is when Ibn `Alqami came to [\(Hulagu Khan and was introduced by the Khawajah.](#)[\(4\)](#)

In another instance he cites a remark ascribed to the Khawajah without however mentioning his name regarding the prophesy of some unnamed person. The prophesy was to the effect that in the event of the caliph's being killed there would occur certain natural disasters.[\(5\)](#) We will return to this remark later on

Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah is another noted historian of the Mongol period who also mentions the above mentioned remark. He too has nothing to say concerning any role of the Khawajah in relation to the Mongol conqueror's attack on Baghdad or in the context of the caliph's execution

Abu al-Fida' is another Arab historian and author of al Mukhtasar fi akhbar al-bashar. He writes that the circumstances of the killing of the caliph were not known, and he does not

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Juwayni Ta'rikh-e jahangusha'i, ed. Ghazwini, Leiden, vol. 3, p. 280, under the - 1 heading, "Dhayl-a kitab, Kayfiyyat-e Waqi'eh-ye Baghdad

.Mustawfi, op. cit., p. 689. also see p. 369 -2

.Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, op. cit., pp. 449, 460 -3

.Ibid., p. 453 -4



indicate anything by way of suggesting any role of the Khawajah in this regard. This is [\(despite the fact that he mentions some points concerning the life of the Khawajah. \(1\)](#)

Muhammad ibn Shakir al-Kutubi (d. ۷۶۴/۱۳۶۲), author of *Fawat al-Wafayat*, wrote a relatively elaborate biographical account of the Khawajah (۶ pages). However, in writing about the Khawajah's services for Hulagu Khan and the Khawajah's standing with the latter, he makes not even the smallest hint about any role of the Khawajah in [\(the episode of Baghdad. \(2\)](#)

Another historian of the ۸th/۱۴th century, Ibn al-Wardi (d. ۷۴۹/ ۱۳۴۸), in his book of history wrote about the fall of Baghdad. He affirms the role of Ibn `Alqami without referring to the Khawajah in any way. [\(3\)](#) However, he mentions the Khawajah's year of death (۶۷۲ H.), his birthplace, his services in Alamut and under Halagu, and his [.building of an observatory](#)

But nowhere does he write about any role of the Khawajah in the events of the fall of Baghdad and the killing of the caliph. [\(4\)](#) Al-Dhahabi (d. ۷۴۶/۱۳۴۵), a well-known Sunni traditionist and scholar of rijal, wrote about the Baghdad episode under the account of the events of the year ۶۵۶/۱۲۵۸. He mentions Ibn `Alqami's position but does not write anything about the Khawajah. [\(5\)](#) Al-Safadi (d. ۷۹۷/ ۱۳۹۴), author of *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat*, also does not mention any role in the fall of Baghdad on the Khawajah's [\(part. \(6\)](#)

Al-Nakhjawani who wrote his book in ۷۲۴/۱۳۲۴ says nothing of the Khawajah in the context of the

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.Abu al-Fida', *al Mukhtasar fi akhbar al-basher*, Beirut, vol. ۳, pp. ۱۹۳, ۱۹۴ –۱  
Ibn Shakir, *Fawat al-Wafayat*; ed. by Ihsan 'Abbas, Dar al-Thaqafah, Beirut, vol. ۳, –۲  
pp. ۲۴۶, ۲۶۲

.Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, vol. ۲, pp. ۲۷۹, ۲۸۱ –۳

.Ibid., vol. ۲, p. ۳۱۸ –۴

.Dhahabi, *op. cit.*, pp. ۳۶۰, ۳۷۱, ۳۷۳ –۵

Al-safadi, al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat, ed. by Zeiter, Istanbul, ١٨٣١, vol. ١, pp. ١٧٩-١٨٣, in the -٤  
journal al-Thaqafat al-Islamiyyah, No. ١٣, p. ٩٥

Al-Ghassani (d. ۷۶۱/۱۳۵۹) is another historian of the period who repeatedly hurls insults at Ibn 'Alqami in a rather elaborate account of the fall of Baghdad. However, he does (not make even the slightest mention of the Khawajah. (۲)

Ibn al-Kazeruni (۶۱۱-۶۹۷/۱۲۱۴-۱۲۹۷), who lived at the time of the events, mentions nothing in his book about the Khawajah. (۳) Likewise, al-'Atabaki (d. ۸۷۴/۱۴۶۹) (۴) and al-Suyuti (d. ۹۱۱/۱۵۰۵) do not refer to the Khawajah. (۵)

The above-mentioned writers, most of whom are famous historians of the ۷th/۱۳th and ۸th/۱۴th centuries, despite their sensitivity concerning the Mongols and the downfall of the caliphate especially with the particular bias of some of them like Ibn al-Wardi and al-Dhahab do not mention anything about the Khawajah. Had there been anything at all to say in this context, they would have emphasized it, especially in view of their unfavorable opinion of the Shi`ah.

The fact that they did not mention anything about the Khawajah cannot be viewed as irrelevant to the non-existence of any role of the Khawajah in this important episode. Furthermore, it may also indicate that before and during the fall of Baghdad, the Khawajah did not have the personal influence with Hulagu Khan as he did have after the event.

#### **b) Books Which Mention the Khawajah's Role)**

Above we have cited the remarks of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, al-Subki, Khwand Mir, and al-Subki. It is necessary to point out the following in their regard:

An examination of the original sources concerning the fall of Baghdad revealed that, despite the anti shi`i bias

.Al-Ghassani, op. cit., pp. ٤٢٤, ٤٣٠ -٢

.Ibn al-Kazeruni, op. cit., p. ٢٧١, ٢٧٢ -٣

.Atabaki, al Nujum al-zahinah fi muluk Misr wa al-Qahirah, Egypt, vol.٧, pp. ٤٧-٤١ -٤

.Al-Suyuti, op. cit., pp. ٤٤٥, ٤٤٤, ٤٧٤ -٥

of some and the general hostility towards the Mongols, none of the historians mentions anything about the Khawajah's role. This itself is the best indicator of the baselessness of the allegations of Ibn Taymiyyah, his likes and followers

The sectarian bias of Ibn Taymiyyah and his pupil Ibn Qayyim as well as others like al-Subki and Ibn al-Imad al-Hanbali who followed suit with them, to the extent that even their expressions are altogether similar – precludes any acceptance of their criticism of Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. Ibn Taymiyyah, in many of his works, takes an antagonistic attitude toward the Shi`ah and makes many baseless accusations against them, which mainly reflect his confusion between the Ghulat and the Imami Shi`is.

The charge leveled by him against the Khawajah in his book al-Radd 'ala al-Nusayriyyah, against the Ghali sect, bears this out. The same allegation is also mentioned in Minhaj al-sunnah, a refutation of al-Allamah al-Hilli's Minhaj al-karamah. It shows that he had been bent on leveling accusations, and like his other accusations this one too was baseless. When al-Allamah al-Hilli heard about Ibn Taymiyyah's refutation of his work, he remarked

لَوْ كَانَ يَفْهَمُ مَا أَقُولُ أَجَبْتُهُ.

“Had he understood what I said, I would have replied to him”<sup>(1)</sup>

When the accusation of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim that the Khawajah had been instrumental in the Mongol sack of Baghdad is examined in the light of their allegations that the Khawajah (a) did not observe the precepts of the Shari'ah, (b) violated the

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<sup>(1)</sup> Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al M'izan, al-'A'lami, Beirut, ١٩٧١, ٧٥١.٢, p. ٣١٧-١

prohibitions of the Shari`ah, (c) did not perform salat, (d) committed indecencies, (e) used intoxicants, (f) was guilty of adultery, (g) did not believe in Resurrection, (h) denied the Divine attributes, (i) was guilty of idolatry, and so on, it will be found that it .was merely their unreasonable bias which made them level such charges

Such slanders do not deserve notice, and of course do not constitute grounds for any .noteworthy historical judgment

An apt witness who can be cited as evidence against the credibility of the remarks .۴ of Ibn Taymiyyah and his followers against the Khawajah is Ibn Kathir (d. ۸۶۴/۱۴۵۹). He was a Hanbali and is regarded as a follower of Ibn Taymiyyah. (۱) Ibn Kathir was definitely aware of Ibn Taymiyyah's allegations from at least three of the latter's .writing. Yet, he did not accept Ibn Taymiyyah's statements

:Referring to the Khawajah's term as Hulagu's minister, Ibn Kathir wrote

The Khawajah was in his company during the episode of Baghdad. Some people imagine that the Khawajah had induced Hulagu to kill the caliph. However, my own .belief is that such an act is not committed by an intellectual and a learned man. (۲)

Ibn Kathir's use of the phrase “some people”, and then his pro-ceding to reject the allegation means that he did not accept what Ibn Taymiyyah had written, for he had not come across any historical basis for the allegation. Moreover, he viewed it as .something far from the dignity of the Khawajah

**c) Sources which don't mention any role of the Khawajah in the Baghdad episode, but which mention a remark of his which led to such accusations**

Even without it, the very presence of

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.Al-Durar al-kaminah, vol. ۱, p. ۳۴۷ –۱

.Ibn Kathir, al Bidayah wa al-nihayah, Beirut, vol. ۱۳, pp. ۲۶۷, ۲۶۸ –۲



the Khawajah in the Mongol conqueror's retinue was sufficient evidence to some for making the accusation. As pointed out by Dr. Shaybi, "In the episode of the sack of Baghdad, although it was a consequence of the general assault of the Mongols that overthrew the regimes that came in their way from Turkistan to Iraq, the Shi`is came [to be blamed for it due to an age-old Sunni-Shi'i hostility.](#)"[\(1\)](#)

The above-mentioned remark of the Khawajah is reported by Rashid al-Din in connection with Husam al-Din, the astrologer, and Khawajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. Ibn al-Tiqtaqa cites it without mentioning the names of the two. Some others, too, took it from Rashid al-Din and reported it with modifications in its content

Before quoting Rashid al-Din, it is worthwhile to mention that since the `Abbasids had been favorably treated by the times, the idea had become popular – and they themselves also propagated it – that they were invincible, that no one was capable of bringing about their downfall. Five hundred and twenty-five years of standing, together with this propaganda, had given an impression of invincibility to the general public

Some time earlier, when Sultan Muhammad Khwarazm Shah wanted to attack Baghdad and overthrow the `Abbasid caliphate, many of his soldiers were stricken by severe cold at Asadabid, near Hamadin, and the invasion had failed. This event, too, was interpreted as something of a miracle to the advantage of the `Abbasids

According to al-Juwayni, "When weakness and enervation affected his state and the miracle of the

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Muhammadan creed twisted his arm of necessity, he had to renounce the idea.”<sup>(1)</sup> No doubt, an event involving a natural disaster had made its impact on the minds of people, including the learned, some of whom were protagonists of the `Abbasid .caliphate

Husam al-Din, the astrologer, who was himself a close associate of Hulagu Khan – and probably closer to him than the Khawajah – also had a similar belief. The discussion that took place between him, Hulagu Khan and the Khawajah was one which dragged the Khawajah's foot into the matter. This anecdote subsequently led to accusing the :Khawajah of inciting the execution of the caliph. Rashid al Din writes

Hulagu Khan consulted about his intended march (to Baghdad) with the courtiers and“ high officials. Everyone said something according to his opinion. Husim al-Din, the astrologer, who had accompanied him at the behest of the Great Khan to determine .the times of mounting and dismounting, was called

Hulagu asked him to report whatever the stars revealed, without any deceit. Since proximity had afforded him temerity, he said right away to the king that it would not be auspicious to make a move against the `Abbasids and to make an armed .expedition into Baghdad

To date every ruler that had moved against the `Abbasids and Baghdad had been denied the boon of life and kingdom. If the king would not listen and carry out his intention, six evils would manifest themselves: first, all his horses will die and the ;soldiers taken ill

second, the sun will not rise; third, there will be no rain; fourth, sandstorms will appear and the world will be devastated by an earthquake; fifth, vegetation will not sprout up from the ground; and sixth, the great king will die in, that year

Halagu Khan wanted proof for what he had predicted. The poor man made an unconvincing effort. The courtiers and the nobles present said that going to Baghdad was quite opportune and expedient

Then Hulagu asked Khawajah Nasir al-Din to be brought and spoke with him. With a misgiving that he was being tested, the Khawajah opined that none of these predictions would come true. Asked further about the proposed undertaking, the Khawajah said that Hulagu Khan will take the place of the caliph. Husim al-Din was called to debate with the Khawajah

The Khawajah said that according to the consensus of adherents of Islam many of the major Companions attained martyrdom and it did not cause any evil consequence. If it is claimed that the `Abbasids' is a special case, one may recall Tahir who came from Khorasan under orders of al-Ma'mun and killed his brother, Muhammad al Amin

Also al-Mutawakkil was killed by his son in league with the commanders. Likewise al-Muntasir and al-Mu'tazz were murdered by their commanders and slaves. In the same way several other caliphs had been killed by someone or oilier and yet no evil consequence had resulted.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Another narration similar to the above has come down from Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, although in it the precedents

[cited by the Khawajah are those of `Ali ibn Abi Talib \(A\) and al-Husayn ibn `Ali \(A\).](#)[\(1\)](#)

Minhaj Siraj, too, has reported the incident without mentioning any answer to the astrologer's threats to Hulagu Khan in the event of his killing the caliph. He merely cites the statements of Badr al-Din Lu' Lu', king of Mosul, who with other unbelievers told Hulagu that if the caliph remained alive, all the Muslims amongst the soldiers as [well as other people would set out to rescue the caliph and kill Hulagu Khan.](#)[\(2\)](#)

Actually, such a consultation – even if it had occurred, with the Khawajah giving his opinion – came at a time when Hulagu Khan had already made up his mind, to the extent that he was not prepared to pay heed to Husam al-Din, who was appointed by his brother as his aid-de-camp to determine `the propitious times of mounting and [dismounting](#)

Even if it is assumed to be true, it cannot be taken as any evidence that the Khawajah incited Hulagu Khan to attack Baghdad. This is so especially because the Khawajah had a misgiving of being tested in the process, which in itself represented a great risk for himself. After all, subsequently, Husam al-Din was executed for his voicing [ominous predictions which turned out to be untrue.](#)[\(3\)](#)

Hulagu Khan, however, evidenced a measure of caution when he ordered that “the caliph be wrapped up in a cloth and his blessed body be kicked until he died.”[\(4\)](#) Dr.

Ha'iri has commented on

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.Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, op. cit, pp. ۱۸۹, ۱۹۰ –۱

.Minhaj Siraj, op. cit., pp. ۱۹۷, ۱۹۸ –۲

.Khwand Mir, op. cit., vol. ۳, p. ۱۰۷ –۳

Minhaj Siraj, op. cit., p. ۱۹۸; Khwand Mir, op. cit., vol. ۲, p. ۳۴۰. According to Ghazwini, –۴ the most precise date of his execution had been ۱۴ Safar ۶۵۶; See Yad-dasht-ha-ye

.Ghazwini, Tehran, vol. ۷, p. ۷۹

:the foregoing report. Apart from the points already mentioned, he points out that  
;the Mongol khan had been assigned the execution of this task by his brother (١)  
a philosopher like the Khawajah could not have confirmed such superstitious (٢)  
;beliefs  
according to Rashid al-Din's report Hulagu did not want to hear any words of (٣)  
opposition; and  
the Khawajah's opinion that 'nothing other than Hulagu's succeeding the caliph (٤)  
.would be the outcome' of the latter's move was an undeniable reality

Dr. Hairi further remarks that the aforementioned anecdote subsequently became a  
basis for the accusation against the Khawajah. Yet, the real reason for it was the  
prevalence of sectarian bias. He cites Wassaf, which after quoting Rashid al-Din's  
report adds that 'after the Khawajah's reply, Hulagu proceeded with a strengthened  
(determination and a calm heart' with the conquest of Baghdad. (١)

This additional assessment provided Ibn Taymiyyah and others with a ground for  
making an unwarranted inference and accusation, such as had not been made by any  
.historian of insight from among those whose names have been mentioned above

### **Effects of the Khawajah's Presence Among the Mongols**

It is a fact that the Khawajah joined the Mongols and remained with them till the time  
of his death. After him, his son too lived among them. (٢) In this context some points  
.deserve attention

The first point is that Khawajah Nasir al-Din was an Imami Shi'i. He was heir to a  
legacy and tradition in which taqiyyah played an important role. It was taqiyyah which  
had safeguarded Shi'ism at critical historical junctures and preserved

Hairi, op. cit., pp. ٩١, ٩٣

.Mudarrsi Zanjani, op. cit, pp. ٧٨, ٧٩, Spuler, op. cit., p. ٢٩٧, from al Maqrizi –٢

it in extremely straitened conditions created for it by such tyrants as Ziyad, Ibn Ziyad, al-Hajjaj, al-Mansur, al-Rashid, al-Mutawakkil and others. Taqiyyah was considered .so important that one who did not take recourse to it was considered faithless

On the other hand, when in captivity at Alamut he had seen with his; own eyes that the Mongol attack accomplished what had not been possible during the preceding one hundred and seventy years for the Seljuq and other rulers. In a short period they had destroyed all the strongholds of the Ismailis, which was something unbelievable for .many

The Khawajah had seen that during the nearly thirty years of their onslaughts the invaders had razed to the ground all the cities of the Islamic world on their way and massacred their entire populace. All its cultural heritage, including libraries, was being destroyed mercilessly. He saw that none could resist the invaders, and history has (testified to this fact.)

The other notable point is that the Mongol invaders, unlike the Arabs, did not invade a country in order to guide its people and to liberate them from paganism and misguidance. On the contrary, they themselves were an uncivilized people with nothing for guidance except the Yasa of Ghengis and hundreds of superstitions and .vain polytheistic beliefs

While the Mongol invasions progressed, the Khawajah might have thought that if one delays co-operation with the new rulers, it would mean letting them carry on with their destruction. Since they showed respect, albeit nominal, toward scholars, why shouldn't he

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take the opportunity and try to save Islam and Muslims? And once the Islamic culture is rescued from ruination by the barbarian hordes, perhaps the conversion of some of them would make them into propagators of knowledge, thought, and religion

The Khawajah must have thought that the only way to protect Islam and Muslims and the religious culture of the society was to associate himself with the Mongol khan. He set out to do so and became Hulagu's associate

The foregoing is not a mere claim, for history has confirmed the Khawajah's farsighted judgment. It has also proved that the Khawajah and others like him from among Shi'i and Sunni `ulama' could accomplish this task fruitfully. However, the caliph, who lacked their wisdom and farsightedness paid no attention to them.

It will be seen subsequently herein that Ibn al-`Alqami, the last minister of the `Abbasid caliph too had offered a similar suggestion, but others, like the `Dawatdar', with their eagerness to remain in their posts, eventually threw all into the abyss of death, drowning Baghdad in blood

However, the Khawajah and others like him did not have so much influence in the beginning as to control Hulagu's decision. In course of time, however, Hulagu did come under such influence in political matters. After him, many Mongol khans embraced Islam and, as rulers, strived for the expansion of Islamic justice and culture – at least to an extent greater than the Umayyads and the `Abbasids whose fall is lamented by Ibn Taymiyyah

This does not

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mean, of course, that we should not recognize the worthy efforts of those who resisted the Mongols and bravely fought them to the extent of becoming martyrs. However, a scholar's grasp of the realities of his world and his exercise of wisdom and farsightedness in acquiring influence among the Mongols are not things that sound .reason would regard as unacceptable

Moreover, it was in the character of the Shi'is that they could protect themselves in the course of their own struggles. Even when they accepted the `Abbasid caliphs for a time – as in the case of the `Alawid leaders like al-Sayyid al-Radi and al-Sayyid al-Murtadha in Baghdad – they chose to do so in the interest of propagating Shi'ism and .the authentic Islamic teachings

Thus, in the Baghdad founded by al-Mansur they could attract nearly half of the city's .population to Shi`ism over the centuries which appropriated its western part

Herein some examples may be cited of the use the Khawajah made of his influence in the Mongol court for promoting Islam and Islamic culture, as well as for saving the lives of `ulama' and thinkers. This will show that the Khawajah chose a correct path in .those difficult conditions

### **The Khawajah's Influence over Hulagu**

As stated earlier, the Khawajah had not acquired any considerable influence over Hulagu in the beginning; this fact has been noted by some researchers.<sup>(1)</sup> For when the Mongols attacked Baghdad, both the Shi`is and the Sunnis were equally adversely affected.<sup>(2)</sup>

Dr. Shaybi has also remarked that the common fate of the Shi`is and

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.Hai'ri, op. cit, p. ۹۲ –۱

Ibn al-Wardi, op. cit., vol. ۲, p. ۲۸۰; al-Dayarbakri, Tarikh al Khamis, Mu'assesat – ۲  
.Sha`ban, Beirut, vol. ۲, p. ۵۷۷

the Sunnis in the sack of Baghdad refutes any charges of a prior arrangement.<sup>(1)</sup> It is notable that the shrine of al-'Imam Musa al-Kadim (A) was also burnt down.<sup>(2)</sup>

However, gradually over a length of time, the Khawajah won the favor of the Mongol khan who assigned him several duties, including the supervision of the awqaf ((endowments)).<sup>(3)</sup>

Furthermore, administration of the affairs of the city of Tus were also entrusted to him.<sup>(4)</sup> For a time he was appointed as yarguchi (prosecutor) at the sole court of the Mongol regime.<sup>(5)</sup> During the siege of Baghdad, the Khawajah was once sent by Hulagu as an emissary to the caliph.<sup>(6)</sup> Later, he became responsible for the construction of an observatory for Hidagu.<sup>(7)</sup>

Finally, the Khawajah's influence became so much that, according to Ibn Shakir: "Khawajah Nasir held an exalted position and was held in; high esteem by Hulagu, inasmuch as whatever he asked of the latter was carried out and the requisite expenditure was provided."<sup>(8)</sup> The Khawajah was a trustworthy man and, as such, was naturally relied upon to a great extent by Hulagu Khan

Shams al-Din ibn Mu'ayyad al-'Ardi says: "The Khawajah carried out the work of the ministry for Hulagu without any embezzlement. He dominated the mind of Hulagu to such an extent that the latter would never ride a horse or go on a journey without his approval."<sup>(9)</sup>

Among the most important tasks he took up were those which pertained to libraries, revival of Islamic sciences, and training of scholars, in which he accomplished his

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.Al-Shaybi, op. cit., p. ۵۲ -۱

.Rashid al-Din, op. cit, vol. ۲, p. ۷۱۳ -۲

Ibn Shakir, op. cit., vol. ۳, p. ۲۵۰ -۳

.Rashid al-Din, op. cit., Spuler, op. cit., p. ۳۴۱ -۴

.Ibn al-Fuwati p. ۳۵۱, in Spuler, op. cit, p. ۳۸۳ -۵

.Rashid al-Din, op. cit., vol. ٢, p. ٧١١ -٦

.Ibn Shakir, op. cit., vol. ٣, p. ٢٤٧ -٧

.Ibid., vol. ٣, p. ٢٤٧ -٨

.Ibid., vol. ٣, p. ٢٥٠ -٩

purpose to an extent unexpected by the side of the destruction brought about by the Mongols and amazing for the period of their supremacy. He collected and set up a library of four hundred thousand books, out of the destroyed libraries of Baghdad, [Syria, al-Jazirah and elsewhere.](#)<sup>(1)</sup>

While he administered the awqaf properties, he spent a tenth of the income to cover the cost of construction of an observatory and the expenses of the scholars working there. Moreover, the benefits of the income reached all Muslims, especially the [`Alawids and Shi`is.](#)<sup>(2)</sup>

Among other deeds of the Khawajah was protection of the scholars and thinkers who for some reason became objects of the Mongol's wrath. In this context, it is very appropriate to cite two instances as recorded by historians

The first is an episode reported by al-Nakhjawani, reckoned as a second generation historian of the era. He wrote his book in ۷۲۴/۱۳۲۴. The episode is mentioned as follows: In the Baghdad episode, `Izz al Din (Ibn Abi al-Hadid) and his brother, Muwaffaq al-Dan were brought out to be executed. When Ibn al Alqami heard about `Izz al-Din, he became alarmed. Immediately he went up to Khawajah Nasir al-Din and beseeched him, saying

Two of the elect of Baghdad who have a great right upon me have been taken to be killed. I implore you to hurry to the king'. The Khawajah left forthwith, and kneeling, according to the Mongol custom, before the Khan, appealed for mercy. The Khawajah explained that the two persons

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.Ibid., vol. ۳, p. ۲۴۷ –۱

.Ibid., vol. ۳, p. ۲۵۰ –۲

were taken to be executed according to the Yasa, and he had come to offer himself to be killed instead. Hearing this, Hulagu laughed and remarked: "Had we wanted to kill you, we wouldn't have let you live until now." Then, benevolently Hulagu ordered that  
(both the condemned men be handed over to him.)<sup>(1)</sup>

In a more interesting story, a successful strategem was used by the Khawajah to rescue another scholar. Ibn Shakir reports that once information reached the Khawajah that Hulagu intended to kill `Ana' al-Din al-Juwayni. The Khawajah told the latter's brother that when the Khan gives an order, he was sure to implement it; it was necessary to think of a strategem. Then taking his staff, rosary and astrolabe, he set out with someone carrying an incense burner following him towards the Khan's tents

When Hulagu's men saw him near the Khan's tent looking into the astrolabe and burning incense they informed him. The Khawajah approached the Khan's men and enquired about the Khan's welfare. They replied that the Khan was alright. The Khawajah told them that he wanted to see the Khan with his own eyes. Hulagu Khan, who had refused to admit anyone at that time, permitted him in

The Khawajah told him that an evil event was expected to occur and that he had recited prayers, burnt incense and beseeched God to deflect the evil from the Khan. He recommended that the Khan too should as a good gesture of gratitude free prisoners in the

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different lands and grant them amnesty. Forthwith, the Khan ordered that the Khawajah's recommendation be carried out. Thus `Ala' al-Din too was liberated, and [\(without any specific request by the Khawajah.\)](#)

The foregoing anecdote clearly shows the Khawajah's subtle dexterity in exercising his influence over Hulagu and in persuading the latter to comply with his wishes. Ibn Shakir, after quoting this anecdote, comments: `The Khawajah displayed extreme cleverness in achieving his objective and thus saved people from harm. His bringing about the freedom of so many prisoners in all the places is indeed an incomparable  
”achievement

By relating instructive antecedents the Khawajah apprised Hulagu Khan, as and when opportune, of the need to show consideration to the people. Once while mentioning the evil treatment of the people of northern Iraq by the soldiers of Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah, following their defeat, he suggested the principles of proper rule and  
.statesmanship (jahandari) to the Mongol ruler

In reply, Hulagu is reported to have told him: “Praise be to God Almighty, we are jahangir' (conqueror of the world) as well as jahandar. We are jahangir for the rebel [\(and jahandar for the tribe – not like Jalal al-Din who was weak and incapable.”](#)

On the other hand, during Hulagu's campaigns the Khawajah's efforts were directed toward inviting the people to surrender and saving them from genocide by the Mongols. At the same time, by bringing about conciliation he would induce the Mongols to act with justice. A comparison of the two periods of Hulagu's life reveals

p: ۳۱

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.Ibn Shakir, op. cit., vol. ۳, pp. ۲۴۷, ۲۴۸ –۱

.Rashid al-Din, op. cit., vol. ۲, p. ۷۱۷ –۲

.the moderation brought about in him under the influence of likes of the Khawajah

Hulagu Khan once sent Shaykh Sharif Tabrazi to spy among Mongol soldiers of Buqa'i, who was hostile to him. The spy was caught and brought to Buqa'i who questioned him about Hulagu. He asked him whether Hulagu still vengefully killed their noblemen, princes, ascetics, pious men and traders

Shaykh Sharif Tabrazi replied that that was true previously. However, now, he said, things had changed, and he recited these verses

ز عدلش نمی سوزد آتش حریر هم آهو همی دوشد از شیر شیر

زانصاف او مـردم آسـوده اند همه ظالمان زار و فرسوده اند

,Because of his just rule, fire does not burn silk

The deer, too, suckles the lioness's milk

,The people are at peace due to his justice

(And all the tyrants are wretched and weak.)

That indeed may be an exaggeration, but to be sure it was due to a change of conduct that the Mongols could maintain their rule. For it is clear that if they had maintained the harsh ways of the earlier days of their rule, their sway would not have lasted for long.

After the death of Hulagu (۱۹ Rabi` al-'Akhir, ۶۶۳/۱۲۶۵), Abaqan, his son, succeeded him with the Khawajah's efforts. Thereafter too the influence of the Khawajah was instrumental in protecting learned men

It is said that Abaqan "rewarded nearly a hundred learned men of standing who had been disciples of Ustadh at-Bashar (the Teacher of Man) Khawajah Nasir al-Din





al-Tusi – may, God's mercy be upon him – who was attached to the Mongol court.”<sup>(1)</sup>

During Abaqan's reign, the Khawajah sermoned and counseled him, „as can be seen  
:from the passage given below

The first thing is that he (the king) should keep the good-pleasure of God, the Exalted and the Holy, that he may do well in both the worlds. Another thing is that he should act with justice and accomplish their (the people's) work expeditiously and righteously, so that they may pray to God for the increase of his majesty and glory. Another thing is that he should abstain from tyrannizing, especially the pious and the innocent, so that he may live long. Another thing is that he should try to make the land flourish so that a lot of wealth is obtained without oppression and the people's  
(misery.<sup>(2)</sup>

However, much remains to be investigated and written about the question of the spread of Islam among the Mongols. What is clear is that a majority of the Mongols, including Hulagu Khan – contrary to what has come to be rumored about his conversion to Islam – had not converted to Islam in that period. What else could be expected of them? But it is enough that we move a little ahead in time, to see what  
.Mustawfi says

After Ghazan Khan ibn Arghun Khan ibn Abaqan ibn Hulagu Khan became king in the year 694/1294, forty years after the Mongol conquest of Baghdad, “the king and his  
(deputy (Amir Nawruz

p: 33

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.Ibid., vol. 2, p. 744 – 1

.Mudarrisi Zanjani, op. cit, pp. 62, 63 – 2

made efforts to strengthen Islam, and destroyed temples and churches. The majesty of their rule brought about the conversion of all the Mongols in Iran to Islam, and the sun of the Muhammadan faith began to shine and the darkness of apostasy and error [\(disappeared.”](#)[\)](#)

It appears that compulsory conversion of Mongols to Islam was the first decree of [Ghazan Khan.](#)[\)](#)

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.Mustawfi, op. cit., pp. ۶۰۲, ۶۰۳. Also see Spuler, op. cit., p. ۲۴۴ ff –۱  
.Ibid., p. ۸۰۳ (footnote), from Wassaf al-hadrah –۲

## About center

In the name of Allah

هَلِيسَتْوَيَالَّذِيَتَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِيَتَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

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.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

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We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable  
.friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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